

Allied Armies Sweep On, No Hint of Armistice

Only Germans at Front, Slacking Before Drive, Show Effect of Efforts to Suspend Hostilities

By PHILIP GIBBS

Special Cable to Evening Public Ledger Copyright, 1918, by New York Times Co. With the British Armies on the Western Front, Oct. 15.

There is no sign of an impending armistice on the western front, and the only hint of its possibility was in the speech of German prisoners, brought down by Allied troops in the new attack launched in Flanders.

It was an international force between Menin and the coast and above all, it was Belgian. Once again the Belgian army was in the field, inspired with an ambition to advance into their own country and to be the first to carry the tidings of liberation to their people.

To me, a spectator of the drama, which is intensified in interest because of the peace proposals, which promise a swift ending to this war, it was strange to be in Flanders again after following the campaign down south by Cambrai and St. Quentin.

I had an idea then that I should never see the Flanders battlefield again under fire, but I went out through Ypres, as on so many days last year, and saw again those ruins which are built into the fabric of British history and the most tragic memories in this war, and went across those frightful fields up through Zonnebeke, past Inverness copse and Glenouire wood, up to Broekseinde and the crest of Passchendaele, still littered with the wreckage of German pill boxes for which the British fought so desperately and still studded with those shell holes and craters over which the British troops stumbled in bogs and lakes on their way to the high ridges.

Time was, and not so long ago, when one could not put one's nose into Ypres or out of it without having a German 6.9 burst extremely close, and when there was a fierce and terribly harassing fire over all this vast belt of country beyond Ypres, and when British gunners below the railway embankment at Zonnebeke and in bog holes below Abraham heights and Passchendaele were always being searched for by high explosives.

Today, after the German retreat, this country has lost its menace, and there are few new shell craters among the old ones, and there is traffic up roads where men used to walk in single file only under cover of night, and then were in danger of death.

But they are the same old roads in the same old Flanders mud and it was an astonishing sight to see the tide of war streaming along these "traffics" and a great army on the move across the ravaged land where there is no living tree in the charred stumps of woods and one wide vista of infernal chaos.

The scene around Passchendaele and along the whole sweep of ridges for many miles is the worst in the world except the way to Bapaume, and in its old solitude it haunted one's soul with its foul aspect. But now it is redeemed by the masses of men marching and riding blithely through it and going forward to the flats, elated by a sense of victory, a certain victory now which nothing can rob them, and peace not far away. Belgian and British gunners shared the roads with their limbers and transport.

Both flying men and anti-aircraft gunners had their camps among the Belgian camps, where men with tasseled caps exchanged cigarettes with them and shouted out "all goes well," as fresh batches of German prisoners came down the boggy tracks.

Belgian ambulances and Red Cross cars, like those which years ago I passed when Dismude was in flames, were established near the old German pill boxes, for which English and Scottish and Irish soldiers fought terrible battles not long ago.

Go to Vim Victory

Troops were marching forward to drive further into the German lines, and they had that hard look of men who have been through all the worst of the war and now go to claim their victory.

"How far to the front?" asked a colonel, leaning forward in his saddle as he passed me, and I said, "I don't know, Mon Colonel, things move so quickly nowadays, and I hear that our men are going on now before Ledeghem."

"Nous les aurons," laughed a gunner perched on a heavy howitzer crawling up the road, "we shall have them before they make this peace."

German wounded and British wounded came back together in several ambulances. I saw Germans, Belgians, English and Scottish soldiers mixed up as they had been picked up from the advanced stations.

Slogging slowly through the muddy tracks came stalling some wounded German soldiers without escort, stumbling stiffly along as if weighed down by their heavy helmets, amid groups of Belgians with bandaged faces and arms or coats cut away, leaving them bare on one side from the shoulder to the waist.

Groups of Jocks, lightly hit, supported each other or sat down in the mud together for a rest on the way back to the casualty clearing stations or discussed their fighting with troops who had been on their right by Moorslede and down to Gheluwe.

All the same tale

It was all the same tale they told. The enemy had put up a fight with his machine guns and then surrendered. The Scots, with Belgians on their left, had gone fast, smashing through the first line of the German resistance north of Ledeghem to St. Peter and getting on the high ground west of Winkel St. Eloi, and with the Belgians going grandly on the left, and coming forward all the time.

The chief characteristic of this fighting, so far as the British were engaged, was the strength with which the enemy held his front line during most of the recent fighting. He has defended his front line without force, relying upon the main line of resistance further back.

But this time exacting an attack he manned his front line quickly and orders were given to his men to hold on to the death. Many of them fought with extreme courage opposite the northern portion of the front. Their machine guns rushed through the barrage to meet the British in the open. Among those who did so were the First Bavarian Reserve, infantry division, who fought desperately between Ledeghem and Kasselberg. Their support battalion was to have manned the second line on the Menin-Roulers railway, but the British were too quick for them and got there first.

This strength in the front line was general along the British length of the attack, and it was not until this was broken that the troops could get forward more easily toward the river Heule, near Courtrai, where they are confronted by a stream eleven feet wide, held as a defensive line by the enemy.

In some places the German soldiers did not fight well, and one of their officers remarked, "What can you expect when they look to an armistice in two or three days?"

One German officer came over very smartly dressed and said he was wearing his "peace clothes."

The Fifth Cavalry Division, which suffered very heavily in the Cambrai fighting, engaged on this northern front, and in spite of their losses in prisoners are called "the war prolongers" by the German line regiments on account of their morale, or stimmung, as they call it.

The British troops attacking further south along the line of Lys met some in the front line in the neighborhood of Wevelgem, which I saw burning from the heights.

Judging from those prisoners I saw under escort, most of them were certain that an armistice would be arranged within a few days, and were rejoiced at the prospect of peace. When some of them were told that that means that Germany is utterly defeated and lost, they said, "That does not matter so long as we get peace, for otherwise we shall be in a worse state."

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CZECH FORCES IN PERIL

Yekaterinburg

By the Associated Press

Vladivostok, Oct. 15.—An appeal to the Allies to avert the loss of Samara and Yekaterinburg, as well as to revive the morale of the Czech-Slovak forces fighting in Eastern Russia, has been received at Allied headquarters. The situation there is said to be serious.

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Socialists Favor Kaiser's Abdication

Continued from Page One

day and, although he has attained more fame in the short period of his elevation than any of his predecessors, his utterances of pre-chancellor days don't harmonize with the present setting, so the godfather of the infant "democracy" appointed by the Kaiser is rudely denounced as a slippery character by the members of the congregation during the baptism. Great turmoil ensued and there are demands for a new "democratic" godfather.

This new fiasco in the last desperate stage setting will hardly help convince the Allies of the stability of German "democracy" or belief in the sincerity of the last German promise.

Ebert, Solf and Kuehlmann appear to be possible candidates for the place, although the Tageblatt suggests Von Payer. The Middle parties are willing to forget and forgive indiscretions after the chancellor's explanation, but the Socialists refuse to support Prince Max.

The Tageblatt gives the new Government away by stating that Prince Max is not the only person in it who thought and wrote differently a few months ago. This does not forgive the Prince, it says, but the people should not have too short memories. The paper points out that the last note which was sent to Washington was signed by Doctor Solf, and not by Prince Max, and that the letter to Prince Hohenzollern did not have the sensational effect abroad which people imagined.

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Ally Asked to Save Samara and Yekaterinburg

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 - Pennsylvania Bank
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 - Philadelphia National Bank
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 - Roxborough Trust Company
 - Second National Bank
 - Sixth National Bank
 - Sons of Italy Bank
 - South Philadelphia Bank
 - Southwark National Bank
 - Southwestern National Bank
 - State Bank of Philadelphia
 - Tacony Trust Company
 - Tenth National Bank
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